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Executive Summary

A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Delaware State Parks proposes to have five full-time military veterans as AmeriCorps members who will be eradicating invasive species from park lands and trails throughout the state. At the end of the first program year, the AmeriCorps members will be responsible for achieving professional certification in herbicide application, prescribed burning and chain saw instruction and removing invasive plants from 200 acres of park land and 150 miles of trails. In addition, AmeriCorps members will leverage an additional 50 volunteers who will be engaged in invasive species eradication and the restoration of native biodiversity.

The program will focus on the CNCS focus areas of Environmental Stewardship and Veterans and Military Families. The CNCS investment of \$64,192 will be matched with \$57,855 in public funding and \$45,989 in-kind funding.

Rationale and Approach/Program Design

B. PROGRAM DESIGN

1. COMMUNITY NEED:

Despite its small size Delaware harbors a diversity of wildlife and habitats within its borders from the Atlantic Ocean coastline to the Piedmont border with Pennsylvania. More than 1,000 species of wildlife have been documented in the state, and more than 125 diverse habitats have been identified, including coastal marine waters and brackish marshes, tidal and non-tidal freshwater streams and wetlands, and upland forests and meadows. Delaware State Parks owns and manages 26,000 acres of public land and trails, whose ecosystems directly support these native plants and wildlife. All are imperiled due to one dilemma: the encroachment of invasive plants and trees.

Delaware State Parks proposes to recruit five full-time military veterans as AmeriCorps members to combat the damaging ecological impact of invasive species and to perform correlated and proactive stewardship activities- reforestation, trail conservation and wildlife management- on targeted state park lands. The planned intervention addresses an evidenced-based critical community need: the adverse ecological consequences of invasive species are well documented both locally and nationally. Invasive species affect the health and sustainability of the state's forests, meadows and greenways by: (1) disrupting the natural habitat for native wildlife, including birds, mammals, turtles and fish; (2)

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reducing biodiversity by competing for resources, such as space, sunlight, water and minerals; (3) encroaching upon endangered species; habitat; (4) disturbing the native plant-animal associations such as pollination and seed dispersal; (5) altering soil conditions by secreting chemicals that inhibit the growth of native species; and (6) hybridizing with native species. (U. S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service, National Strategic Framework for Invasive Species Management, August, 2013).

The U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service defines the magnitude of the problem to be addressed in its characterization of invasive species as a catastrophic wildfire in slow motion due to the devastating effect on native habitats and ecosystems, both economic and environmental. The consequence of invasive species cost the American public an estimated \$138 billion each year and the Forest Service has identified invasive species as one of four critical threats to our Nation's ecosystems. Burgeoning global trade and transportation have facilitated the distribution of species well beyond their native range and many species of invasive plants; insects, terrestrial animals and aquatic organisms are already established in our nation's forests and grasslands. (United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service, National Strategic Framework for Invasive Species Management, August, 2013).

Delaware State Parks has been actively managing park lands to control invasive species since 2001, when the Environmental Stewardship Program was established by the Delaware Legislature. Funds were allocated to four state agencies-Division of Parks and Recreation, Division of Fish and Wildlife, Department of Agriculture Forest Service and Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs- to be used for, ¿The planning and implementation of management projects on public lands that promote cultural preservation and conservation activities related to plants and animals and their habitats.¿¿ According to a 2014 report by the Early Detection and Distribution Mapping System, a web-based charting method for invasive species identification, Delaware has a total of 365 discrete invasive plant locations, with New Castle County in northern Delaware reporting the highest amount.

The loss of Delaware's native plants results in the loss of the native insects, birds and animals that depend on them for survival. The Division of Fish and Wildlife maintains an endangered species inventory and in 2013, 21 species of birds, 7 species of fish and reptiles, 30 species of insects and 9 species of mammals were listed as endangered.

The Environmental Stewardship Program's staff has been decreased dramatically in the past three years due to a reduction in its budget, from \$207,000 in 2006 to \$25,200 in 2014. With only two Field Biologists and three seasonal staff, the effort to sustain native ecosystems and to implement

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prevention and preservation programs on priority park lands is endangered. Best management practices to control invasive species require early detection, rapid response and a multi-scale monitoring effort designed to gauge progress and focus resources on the highest priority areas. Utilizing AmeriCorps members in intervention activities, initially under the supervision of their Program Leader and a Field Biologist and subsequently as Team Leaders leveraging volunteer groups, will produce the intended outcome of the reestablishment of native diversity within priority park lands.

Communities where AmeriCorps members will serve are diverse and located throughout the state: In the north, at Bellevue State Park, prolific urban interloper trees-the Norway maple and the Bradford pear-produce thousands of seeds which drift into the park, producing seedlings that if allowed to mature would force native trees to struggle for survival under their dense shade. In the Piedmont province of New Castle County-the location of several northern state parks-a perennial herb known as lesser celandine is causing severe ecological damage. It is a vigorously growing plant that forms carpet-like patches so dense that literally nothing else grows. On the floodplains where lesser celandine is most often found, a plethora of native plants compete for survival, such as Virginia bluebells, lowland fragile fern, river wild rye, eastern waterleaf and the green-headed coneflower. Due to the aggressive nature of lesser celandine, these once flourishing native species are being eradicated and are in danger of extinction from the state's flora.

In the middle of the state at Fort DuPont State Park, reforestation is the goal to increase the natural habitat for an estimated 200 species of migratory birds. With targeted spraying for Japanese stiltgrass and mile-a-minute vine, enough trees will attain maturity to ensure a sustainable habitat for migratory birds. Nearby on Fort Delaware State Park's Pea Patch Island is a migratory bird rookery, considered to be the largest habitat for migratory wading birds north of Florida. The park is carefully monitored each year to evaluate whether the established riparian buffer-perennial vegetation-has provided sufficient sustenance for the estimated 3,000 nesting pairs of herons, egrets, and ibises.

In southern Delaware, in dune areas at Cape Henlopen and Delaware Seashore State Parks, conservation efforts have centered on eliminating the Japanese pine, which has attained dominance with its prolific seed production and resistance to indigenous pathogens. In an area where beach heather, a rare dune shrub, should be sprouting forth its golden blossoms in the spring, the ground instead is covered with a six-inch layer of Japanese pine needles.

The Delaware Bay shores of the coastal parks region are a natural area acknowledged as one of the state's most important stopovers for migratory birds. The bay shores beaches and marshes are the

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only rest stop for Atlantic Flyway migratory birds on their annual odyssey from their winter feeding grounds in South America to their Arctic breeding sites. More than 100 species of migratory and nesting birds visit portions of this landscape throughout the year, including waterfowl, raptors, shorebirds and songbirds. Invasive species have been causing increasing amounts of stress to this landscape and preserving the health and quality of this crucial stopover for migratory birds has global conservation implications.

An additional service activity for AmeriCorps members is the removal of invasive plants from the state parks' interconnected network of shared-use trails and pathways. Delaware has approximately 506 miles of public trails and multi-use pathways; the State operates and maintains almost two-thirds of the existing trails, with nearly half of the state's portion located in Delaware State Parks. The encroachment of invasive species on ADA-compliant trails impedes recreational opportunities for park visitors and with eradication; disability inclusion will be a significant result of the program's delivery of service.

Delaware's biological diversity provides the state and its citizens with numerous economic and environmental benefits: Outdoor recreation in Delaware generates \$4 billion dollars in consumer spending, provides 39,000 citizens with employment and their salaries generate \$304 million in state and local tax revenue. Preserved open space contributes to the environmental health of Delaware, which in turn contributes to the quality of life for the 5 million people who visit the parks annually to participate in both active and passive recreational activities.

Recruiting and training veterans to address this significant community need solves an additional problem- despite training and job skills acquired in the military, young veterans of recent conflicts have encountered more difficulty in securing employment than their civilian counterparts. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the jobless rate for all U.S. veterans was 6.9 percent in October of 2014, slightly lower than it is for the population as a whole. However, the unemployment rate for recent veterans - those who have served since 2001- was 10 percent, with 246,000 out of work, a figure that has risen by 37,000 in the past year.

The socioeconomic consequences of unemployment for veterans are dire: One in five households that relies on the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program has a veteran in it, and veterans also rely on food stamps from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program at a higher rate than civilians. Veterans are also disproportionately likely to experience homelessness: While they make up 7 percent of the general population, 13 percent of adults who are homeless are veterans.

As certification in chemical and mechanical invasive removal strategies are transferable skills that will

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be valued by future employees in the field of environmental stewardship and wildfire management, it is anticipated that AmeriCorps members will have the education and experience necessary for full-time employment in the field of environmental stewardship at the completion of their member service year. Delaware State Parks's AmeriCorps program will provide veterans with: (1) the training and professional certification required for a career in environmental stewardship; (2) the opportunity to network with prospective employers; (3) a support structure for transitioning to civilian life; and (4) park housing and an empathetic Program Leader.

2. THEORY OF CHANGE AND LOGIC MODEL:

Delaware State Parks proposes to recruit five full-time military veterans as AmeriCorps members to combat the damaging ecological impact of invasive species and to perform correlated and proactive stewardship activities on targeted state park lands. The identified community need-the adverse ecological effects of invasive species on distressed public lands and trails- requires an aggressive regiment of member service activities such as targeted spraying and the removal of non-native species to allow for the desired outcome, the reestablishment of native diversity. The theory of change is supported by evidence-based interventions locally and nationally and the member service activities will be designed to effectively: (1) eradicate non-native species from 200 acres of distressed parks landscapes and 150 miles of trails and (2) create the opportunity for a resurgence of functional ecosystems vital to sustaining native plants and wildlife.

The priority focus areas of the proposed AmeriCorps program are Environmental Stewardship and Veterans and Military Families; the performance measures to be used as output indicators are: the number of acres of park land and miles of trails treated and improved and the number of full-time military veterans receiving professional certification in herbicide application, trails conservation and chain saw and cross cut accreditation.

AmeriCorps members will design invasive species management strategies aligned with the 2005 Delaware Invasive Species Management Plan, and guided by the four program elements identified in the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service's National Strategy and Implementation Plan for Invasive Species Management: prevention; early detection and rapid response; control and management; and rehabilitation and restoration. Early detection and rapid response is the process of identifying and quantifying invasive species infestations and taking immediate actions to eradicate the invasive plants to maximize the biological effectiveness of the actions. Control and management refers to intervention activities to minimize the spread of an invasive species; management activities are based upon species-specific strategies which ultimately accomplish the land management goals of

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rehabilitating and restoring native ecosystems.

AmeriCorps members and their Program Leader will implement this four-tiered approach for priority invasive species incursion areas, 7 hours per day, 5 day a week for the time necessary to eliminate the invasive species from the targeted landscape and trails. AmeriCorps members and their Program Leader will be simultaneously recruited and will receive highly effective training and professional certification in herbicide application; chainsaw and cross cut techniques and trail conservation.

AmeriCorps members will also attend the Delaware State Fire School to learn controlled burns and wildfire management techniques; supplemental training includes first aid and CPR training, an OSHA presentation, and a week-long National Association of Interpretation's Certified Interpretive Guide instruction.

AmeriCorps members will serve initially under the supervision of their Program Leader and experienced Field Biologists and Trails Planners, and subsequently will engage 50 community volunteers recruited by Delaware State park's Volunteer Coordinators to exponentially expand the service activities impact on park lands. It is anticipated that by the end of their first member service year, AmeriCorps members will have sufficient training and experience for employment in the field of environmental stewardship.

3. EVIDENCE BASE:

The adverse ecological effects of invasive species can be eliminated through an aggressive regiment of intervention activities that will result in the desired outcome, the reestablishment of native ecosystems. Strong evidence exists that the proposed member service intervention activities will increase native diversity in state park lands and specific citations of studies by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service, the National Park Service and Delaware State Park's own Environmental Stewardship Program are cited in the following paragraphs to support the premise.

The United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service National Strategic Framework for Invasive Species Management provides evidence that the four-tiered approach of prevention; early detection and rapid response; control and management; and rehabilitation and restoration has succeeded when strategically applied. The Forest Service developed a list of 15 priority "new invader" plant species and initiated an early detection and rapid response program within the Bridge-Teton National Forest. The Forest Service hired a packhorse contractor with extensive experience to detect, map and treat all listed invasive weeds within 7,000 priority acres of the Teton Wilderness. It was the first broad effort to proactively confront and successfully address the invasive weed problem within the Teton Wilderness using the early detection and rapid response approach. (United States

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Department of Agriculture Forest Service, National Strategic Framework for Invasive Species Management, August, 2013).

The National Park Service's Exotic Plant Management Teams work to preserve biodiversity more broadly by restoring ecosystems and controlling invasive species. Since being established in 2001, 16 teams with specialized knowledge and experience in invasive plant management have targeted 700 invasive plants nationwide and in the Northeast Region alone, the teams have eradicated invasive species on 285,000 acres of national park land. The National Park Service follows the guiding principles of the United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service, initially inventorying and monitoring sites, followed by early detection and rapid response and ultimately, restoration of native habitats for the enjoyment of future generations. (National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, Exotic Plant Management Team Program Annual Report, 2013).

The Environmental Stewardship Program has implemented a number of strategies to reestablish native diversity and can demonstrate the effectiveness of its intervention practices with past performance outcome data from the program: After three years of invasive plant removal and seven years of follow-up management, the 24-acre Tulip Woods, a significant nature preserve within Brandywine Creek State Park- is now 95% native species in all forest layers. Wide swaths of land within the forest once dominated by Japanese stiltgrass and garlic mustard are supporting native wild ginger and bloodroot, and diversity is emerging among the new trees, with native oaks and hickories growing alongside beeches. (Delaware Division of Parks and Recreation, The Evolution of the Environmental Stewardship Program, Rob Line, October, 2012).

4. NOTICE PRIORITY:

The priority focus areas of the proposed AmeriCorps program are Environmental Stewardship and Veterans and Military Families; the performance measures to be used as output indicators are: the number of acres of park land and miles of trails treated and improved and the number of full-time military veterans receiving professional certification in herbicide application, trails conservation and chain saw and cross cut accreditation.

AmeriCorps members will receive education and training in environmental stewardship and environmentally-conscious best practices, leading to a change in behavior towards protecting the environment ; members will engage in service activities to combat the adverse ecological impact of invasive species on 200 acres of state park lands, thereby improving the lands biodiversity; and members will perform correlated environmental stewardship activities on 150 miles of trails and pathways throughout the state park system, thereby improving public access and use. The secondary

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priority focus area is Veteran and Military Families; the performance measure to be used as an output indicator is the number of full-time military veterans receiving professional certification. The Veteran AmeriCorps members will receive professional certification in herbicide application; chain saw and cross cut certification, and will attend the Delaware State Fire School to gain proficiency in wildfire management as it pertains to invasive species eradication.

5. MEMBER TRAINING:

Delaware State Parks will hire a supervisor for the five full-time AmeriCorps members, known as a Program Leader, and this individual will participate in all member service activities and job training for the duration of the grant period. Ideally the Program Leader will be a veteran with prior supervisory skills; experience coordinating project tasks and logistics and have an educational background in natural resource management.

After a three-day orientation to service workshop, AmeriCorps members and their Program Leader will receive professional certification in herbicide application, trails conservation and chain saw and cross cut accreditation through Delaware State Park's established training curricula, and will attend the Delaware State Fire School to learn controlled burns and wildfire management techniques.

Supplemental training includes first aid and CPR training, an OSHA presentation, and a week-long National Association of Interpretation's Certified Interpretive Guide instruction. AmeriCorps members will also have the opportunity to choose a more advanced training in a relevant area in which they have a strong interest.

As part of their orientation, prohibited AmeriCorps member's activities will be defined as outlined by the Corporation for National and Community Service. As members are directly supervised by their Program Leader in strategic activities on state park lands, the rules will be adhered to as a matter of standard practice.

6. MEMBER SUPERVISION:

AmeriCorps members will receive high quality guidance and support from their Program Leader, Field Biologists and Trails Planners, as well as regional Volunteer Program Coordinators. While members will serve initially under the supervision of experienced Field Biologists and Trails Planners, once adequately trained in invasive species eradication techniques, AmeriCorps members will engage community volunteers recruited by regional Volunteer Program Coordinators to expand the service activity's impact.

7. MEMBER EXPERIENCE:

AmeriCorps members will be military veterans recruited from the Delaware Commission of Veterans

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Affairs; the Employers Support of Guard Reserve; the Dover Interfaith Mission for Men; and the Delaware Center for Homeless Veterans. It is estimated that between 40 to 50 men and women will be interviewed by Delaware State Parks Environmental Stewardship Coordinator and the Chief of Volunteer and Community Services, and five full-time military veterans will be selected to participate in the program. As certification in chemical and mechanical invasive removal strategies are transferable skills that will be valued by future employees in the field of environmental stewardship and wildfire management, it is anticipated that the recruitment process will yield worthy candidates, as it is well documented that veterans are struggling to secure employment.

Delaware State Park's AmeriCorps program will provide veterans with: (1)) the training and professional certification required for a career in environmental stewardship; (2) the opportunity to network with prospective employers; (3) a supportive structure for transitioning to civilian life; and (4) park housing and a supportive and empathetic Program Leader.

Working collaboratively as a unit, AmeriCorps members will develop vital connections not only with each other, but with the broader service network of conservation organizations statewide. AmeriCorps members will partner with an array of community organizations and veterans support services, from the Wounded Warriors Project to the Delaware Joining Forces Program, a state-wide public and private organizational network that provides services through its partners to the State's military and veteran communities.

AmeriCorps members will have the opportunity for a meaningful service experience preserving park lands; contemplation and reflection are quintessential aftereffects of spending time in the natural world. Restoring the rich and diverse ecosystems within state park lands will be a vital pathway towards developing enduring ethics of conservation and productive citizenry; understanding our reciprocal relationship with nature leads to an environmental philosophy of preservation and empathy for all life forms. Protected forests and parks are not zoos, not just places to see nature. They are the basic life support systems that provide the clean air, water, fisheries, recreation and natural coastal protections that sustain us. Conservation is self-preservation.

8. COMMITMENT TO AMERICORPS IDENTIFICATION:

AmeriCorps members will receive a three-day orientation to service; workshop and will be provided with a uniform incorporating both the AmeriCorps logo and the Delaware State Parks emblem. At the beginning of service activities within each park, AmeriCorps members will be introduced to staff and the volunteers with whom they are collaborating, with an emphasis on service goals and ultimate objectives.

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Organizational Capability

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPABILITY:

1. ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND AND STAFFING:

The AmeriCorps State Parks Partners will operate within the structure of the Delaware Division of Parks and Recreation, which celebrated its 55th anniversary in 2006. The Division traces its beginning back to 1937, when the State Parks Commission was formed to oversee recreation in the state. In 1951, the legislature approved funds for the purchase of three state parks: Trap Pond, Fort Delaware, and Brandywine Springs. In 1970, the state changed from a commission-based government and adopted a cabinet form, resulting in the creation of the Division of Parks and Recreation. There are now 14 state parks located throughout Delaware serving the recreation, environmental education, historical and cultural interpretation, and conservation and open space needs of Delawareans.

Delaware State Park's Environmental Stewardship and Volunteer and Community Services Sections are partners in the proposed AmeriCorps initiative, and together have the experience, staffing and management structure to implement the program. The Environmental Stewardship Program has a fourteen-year history of attaining native plant diversity on park lands and the Chief of Volunteer and Community Services has extensive knowledge in federal grant management.

Delaware State Parks has collaborated with a myriad of community partners in planning and implementing the intervention activities in which AmeriCorps members will become proficient. In 2014, the Volunteer Office developed and implemented an eight-week summer Youth Conservation Corps program in partnership with Delaware Futures, a nonprofit organization providing academic and social support to disadvantaged high school students. The Youth Conservation Corps promotes educational achievement and the development of leadership and workplace skills through meaningful conservation work benefiting the environment. Fourteen students participated in outdoor conservation and educational activities throughout the state and successfully completed the program. A marked increase in environmental stewardship and interest in environmental careers was reported by students at the end of their term of service.

Additionally, Delaware State Park's Volunteer Office operated an AmeriCorps program from 2002 to 2005 and received the following awards in recognition of exemplary program delivery: the 2003 Governor's Tourism Award- Best Partnership Award, the 2004 AmeriCorps NCCC North East Region Partner Award and Finalist for the 2004 AmeriCorps Innovative Program Award. The prior AmeriCorps program grew exponentially, engaging twelve full-time members the first year and ending with twenty-four full-time members and ninety-six part-time members in 2005-2006. Our

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Fiscal Review and Program Desk Audits showed no negative findings; in fact, our reviews in these areas were exemplary.

The Division of Parks and Recreation has extensive experience in the implementation of programmatic and grant initiatives, including Federal Land and Water Conservation Trust Fund, Recreational Trails Program for Delaware and the Delaware Land and Water Conservation Trust Fund. From January through May of this fiscal year, more than 10,000 volunteer hours have been tracked in a variety of park projects, including trails conservation and invasive species eradication. Delaware State Parks has partnerships with more than 150 community organizations, including non-profit Friends of State Parks groups, corporate associates and civic and local government organizations.

AmeriCorps members will have a pyramid of support throughout their term of service, both on site and while in training. AmeriCorps members will be directly supervised by a Program Leader, to be hired specifically for this supervisory role with match grant funds. Volunteer Program Coordinators from each park region will solicit volunteers for AmeriCorps members to lead in service activities.

2. COMPLIANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY:

The AmeriCorps program will operate within the structure of the Volunteer and Community Services Section and policies and procedures for grant management are well established. Administration of Park's \$17 million annual operating budget is the sole responsibility of eight full-time employees in the fiscal section; an account specialist from this section will be assigned specifically to assure financial and reporting compliance for the AmeriCorps grant. This individual will be responsible for all program payments, stipends and expense tracking, with oversight provided by the Chief of the Volunteer and Community Services Section. All purchases will follow Delaware State Park's approval procedures and will be reviewed and approved by the Volunteer Office.

The Chief of Volunteer and Community Services has extensive knowledge in federal grant management, having successfully implemented a prior AmeriCorps program. In addition, the Volunteer Office initiated a Youth Conservation Corps Program in 2014 and has an established Internship Program. The Chief of Volunteer Services will directly manage the members' service year activities and training, in collaboration with the Environmental Stewardship Program Manager. All staff, site supervisors and members will receive specific training to ensure compliance with AmeriCorps rules, regulations and prohibited activities. The prohibited activities will be outlined in the member orientation, will be posted at member site locations and will be included in the member contract. The AmeriCorps members will be in compliance when following the invasive species

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removal process and while in the training workshops as proposed in this application. The subject of compliance will also be included in all member surveys and evaluations.

Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy

D. COST EFFECTIVENESS AND BUDGET ADEQUACY:

1. COST EFFECTIVENESS:

The budget for the program has been designed to be cost effective while both providing AmeriCorps members with the educational training and professional certification necessary to prepare them for employment in the field of environmental stewardship and the supervision and support essential for a successful member service experience. The programs operating expenses are aligned with the narrative and include in-kind personnel expenses (including fringe benefits) of the Field Biologist, Trails Planner, Account Specialist, Volunteer Administrator II, Volunteer Program Coordinator and the Program Leader. Staff travel to attend CNCS-sponsored technical assistance meetings is outlined in the budget, as well as members' travel via a reserved van to educational trainings and certifications and to service project sites throughout the state.

Supplies and materials relate to members' uniforms and stewardship safety gear and tools (hard hats, gloves, rain gear, and several sets of chain saw safety apparatus) and a cell phone for the Program Leader for communicating from remote park locations. The Program Leader will attend an orientation to the core values of the CNCS prior to meeting AmeriCorps members, followed by an intensive three-day orientation to service workshop with members and staff associated with the program.

Throughout the grant period, AmeriCorps members will attend full-time training workshops in: Chemical Application; First Aid and CPR; OSHA; Chain Saw and Cross Cut Techniques and Advanced Training at the Delaware Fire School and the National Association of Interpretation. Members will additionally be allowed to choose training in an area of special interest to them and in furtherance of their environmental stewardship career goals. Costs for a three-day evaluation of the program are included in the budget as well as expenses associated with an end of service year celebration.

AmeriCorps members living allowance is calculated at a low rate with associated member support costs-FICA, Workers Compensation and CIMA health insurance- completing the operating budget for the program.

2. BUDGET ADEQUACY:

The non-CNCS funding necessary to support the program is a committed cash match from state and federal resources and in-kind services: \$38,732 will be appropriated from the State of Delaware's

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Appropriated Special Funds for Delaware State Parks, \$46,163 has been arrogated from the Department of Transportations Recreational Trails Program for Delaware and \$18,581 represents in-kind support from the percentage of auxiliary staff time dedicated to the project.

Evaluation Summary or Plan

N/A

Amendment Justification

N/A

Clarification Summary

A. Programmatic clarifixcation items:

1. Environmental Stewardship funding has led to significant shortages in staffing, with a decrease from 10 employees in 2011 to 4employees in 2015. As described, member activities will conduct much needed environmental stewardship activities. Funding does not exist to hire employees to conduct these activities. Additionally, while current staff employee work is similar, it is not the same as the activities the members will perform; staff members are field biologists and work in a leadership capacity. The member activities will provide conservation activities under the direction of the staff employees.

As a result, AmeriCorps member activities are in compliance with non-supplantation, non-duplication and non-displacement restrictions.

2. Field Biologist - field supervisor, determines prescribed treatment areas, completes follow up and reporting. Helps coordinates field activities

Trails Planner - Delaware State Parks trails planner, determines work, area of work, and method of work for trails.

Volunteer Administrator II - Oversight of AmeriCorps grant and grant activities

Volunteer Program Coordinator - day to day administration of grant to include member files, budget compliance, and ensuring performance reporting.

3. The program leader (and other appropriate staff) will participate in a one day orientation provided

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by State Commission staff including the history of national service, distinguishing national service from employment, maintenance of member files, timekeeping and evaluation requirements, prohibited activities, expectations for participation in statewide service events and trainings, etc.

4. Training will be provided by the following

Orientation to Service Workshop - Delaware Commission on National and Volunteer Service

Herbicide Applicator Certification - Delaware Dept of Agriculture

First Aid/CPR - Red Cross

OSHA Training - State of Delaware

Chain Saw and Cross Cut Training - USDA Forest Service

National Association of Interpretation Certification - State of Delaware

Wildfire Certification - Delaware Fire School

5. Executive Summary updated with correct CNCS investment and match amounts within summary narrative.

B. Budget Clarification - budget documents were updated and edited. Cost Per Member Service Year has been reduced and other clarifications were added.

C. Performance Measure Clarifications

1. Ensure unduplicated counts of acreage:

Assignment of treatment acreage is determined by targeted habitat and conforms to the size and contour of the area to be treated. Treatment area is assigned through Geographical Information Systems mapping. Upon completion of prescribed treatment, the treated area is recorded and the treatment area is over-layed in GIS map. Follow up treatment does not create a new overlay, but is considered an extension of initial treatment.

2. A. How Standard will be followed.

Members will follow the Environmental Stewardship Plan to target, restore and maintain the highest

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quality examples of these habitats within Delaware State Parks, the best examples of these habitats in the State of Delaware, by targeting the invasive plant species threatening these habitats.

B. Instrument used to measure improvements

Site monitoring by a Delaware State Parks Biologist, both prior to restoration efforts and after restoration efforts will determine the efficacy of the treatments.

Treated acres will be measured through the field documentation and recordation through Geographical Information Systems mapping. The entire Delaware State Parks System habitats have been mapped already.

c. Define what is considered improved.

These objectives will be achieved when a reduction of the percentage cover of invasive plant species at every level within the habitat has been reduced, allowing native species to recover. Site stability or Maintenance Level will be achieved once the invasive levels in all layers of the habitat fall under 5%.

4. Duration/Dosage of intervention:

Members will conduct initial treatment of targeted areas and at least one follow-up treatment.

5. Performance measure added for miles of trails- members will conduct Trail maintenance activities on 161 miles of trails in Delaware State Parks.

6. NOFO priority - Veterans and Military Families - performance measure added.

D. Strategic Engagement Slots

Our recruitment pool is specific to veterans only. We are open to veterans with disabilities provided that they are capable of meeting the objectives of the grant.

E. We are not requesting No-Cost MSY's.

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Clarification 4-17-2015:

B. Budget Clarification

1. Section G - Member training - What costs are included in the member end of service year celebration? Also, this line item should be moved to Section I.

This Cost is for the Life After AmeriCorps Conference and the budget narrative has been updated to indicate this.

2. Section G- Member training - Please check the calculation for the DE Fire School Certification, it appears incorrect.

The calculation has been corrected and now accurately reflect cost from cost per member per day to total cost per member.

3. Section I - Criminal history background checks are required for all staff. Please revise the budget to include the costs of these checks, or confirm the checks will be completed and how the cost will be covered.

The budget has been revised to include 6 staff members and the 5 AmeriCorps members.

4. Section III - Based on the current budget, the maximum allowable for the CNCS Commission share was exceeded; the budget needs to be revised.

I have been instructed to zero out this amount by the commission and this has been updated in the budget.

5. All impacted Section budget totals and subsequent impacts of totals on calculations for Match Share and Section III costs have been recalculated and updated to reflect these changes.

Continuation Changes

N/A

Grant Characteristics